Curriculum System in Finland

Basic Education Act and Decree
General National Objectives and Distribution of Lesson Hours
(Ministry of Education)

- Goals for education and time allocation between different subjects

National Core Curriculum (National Board of Education)

- National regulation
- General framework for providing and organising education

Local Curricula (Education providers and schools)

- Local decisions and conceptualization of the national core curriculum

School’s Annual Plan (Schools)

- Realisation of local curriculum
Refoms in Finnish Basic Education

- **1970** first national curriculum – strongly centralized
- **1985** curriculum reform – towards decentralization
  - More decision making to education providers
- **1994** curriculum reform – decentralization
  - School-based decision making
- **2004** curriculum reform – national steering more rigorous
- **2014** curriculum reform – pedagogical guidelines
Finnish Curriculum Reform 2012 - 2016

- National Core Curriculum
  22.12.2014
  - Basic Education
  - Pre-primary Education
  - Voluntary additional basic education

- General upper secondary education
  September 2015

- Local Curricula
  1.8.2016
The Ground of the Curriculum Reform

**Pedagogical reform**
- Transforming from WHAT to learn to HOW to learn?
- Definitions of pedagogical aspects of schooling

**Changing school culture**
- Focus on school-level process: pedagogical thinking and renewal of learning environments, working approaches and assessment

**Building integrity of basic education**
- Generic competences, multidisciplinary learning modules, connections and collaboration between subjects

**Curriculum as a (digital) tool**
- Web-based eCurriculum as a national service
- Platform for viewing, browsing and filtering curriculum contents
Organization of the national curriculum work

STEERING GROUP

Chair: NBE
Members:
Ministry of culture and education
Teacher education
Textbook publishers organization
Teacher organization
Education provider

36 WORKING GROUPS

Chair: NBE
Members:
Teachers
Education providers
Teacher education

COORDINATING GROUP

NBE
Chairs of the working groups
Transparent planning process

• The core curriculum was outlined by multidisciplinary working groups supported by online consultation groups
• Teachers were represented in each working group
• Education providers were asked to provide feedback via three surveys
• the NBE website had open consultations three times during the process
  • 2012 - general guidelines
  • 2013 - pre-primary education
  • 2014 - basic education (including subjects)
• Key stakeholders to provide their official opinions on the new national core curriculum during the autumn of 2014
Key Elements in Finnish Core Curriculum

General Guidelines
- for development of the School culture
- for development of learning environments and working methods
  - for student assessment
  - support for learning, pupil welfare

7 Transversal Competences
- Each subject builds the pupil’s competence
- Are expressed in the definition of the objectives and key content areas of the subjects

Multidisciplinary learning modules
- one multidisciplinary learning module every school year

Subjects
Grades 1-2
- objectives, content areas, pedagogical guidelines, assessment targets

Subjects
Grades 3-6
- objectives, content areas, pedagogical guidelines, assessment criteria

Subjects
Grades 7-9
- objectives, content areas, pedagogical guidelines, assessment criteria
For the benefit of skills and education

Transversal Competences

Consist of
- knowledge
- skills
- values
- attitudes
- will

Competence development is influenced not only by the contents on which the pupils work but also by how they work and how the interaction between the learner and the environment functions.
Grade units and transition points

**Grades 1-2**
- Transversal competences in grades 1-2
- Objectives, content areas and pedagogical issues of subjects in grades 1-2

**Grades 3-6**
- Transversal competences in grades 3-6
- Objectives, content areas and pedagogical issues of subjects in grades 3-6

**Grades 7-9**
- Transversal competences in grades 7-9
- Objectives, content areas and pedagogical issues of subjects in grades 7-9

Assessment at the end of grade 2: assessment targets that play a key role for the student’s learning

Assessment at the end of grade 6: criteria for grade (mark) 8

Final assessment: criteria for grade (mark) 8
## The Structure of Subject

### Mathematics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives for instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content-areas connected with objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aims relating learning environments and working methods in mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidance, differentiation and support in mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment for learning in mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment criteria in mathematics on 6th grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final assessment criteria in mathematics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multidisciplinary Learning Modules

- the education provider shall ensure that the pupils' studies include at least one multidisciplinary learning module every school year.
- The objectives, contents and implementation of multidisciplinary learning modules are decided in the local curriculum and specified in the school's annual plans.
- To plan and implement multidisciplinary learning modules, cooperation is required between subjects.
- All subjects are involved in implementing the learning modules as required.
Assessment Culture That Supports Learning

The school plays a crucial role for the self-concept the pupils form themselves as learners and persons

Versatile assessment and instructive feedback are key pedagogical means for teachers to support the pupils’ learning

For most part, assessment is an interaction between the teacher and pupils

Cooperation between home and school is part of a good assessment culture

Assessment is also an instrument of self-reflection for teachers
General guidelines for assessment in the new national curricula

- Pupil assessment is divided into **assessment during the course of studies** and **final assessment**.
  - The two perform different roles.
- Student’s progress, work skills, and behavior are **assessed in relation to the objectives** defined in the national core curricula and local curricula.
- Students’ performances are not compared to each other.
- Assessment is based on a diversity of evidence.
Assessment at the end of school year

- According to Basic Education Decree the student is to be given a school year report at the end of the school year.
- The school year report contains either verbal assessment or grades expressing how the student has achieved the objectives in different subjects.
- Grades 1-7: verbal assessment or grades depending on the decision of education provider.
- Grades 8-9: Only grades.
Final assessment

- The task of the final assessment is to define how well the student has achieved the objectives of the basic education syllabus in the different subjects at the conclusion of his or her studies.

- It is scheduled for grades 7, 8 or 9 depending on subject and local decisions, and is to be done on an equal basis.

- The student's final grade is to be based on the student's performance in the final phase of basic education and the final assessment criteria.

- Criteria for final assessment in basic education have been prepared for all core subjects. The pupil's performance is assessed with those criteria, on the basis of diverse evidence.
Follow-up and Evaluation of the Reform 2015-2018

1. Curriculum reform starts
2. Reform process at national and local level
3. Implementations, guidance and support
4. Follow-up and evaluation of the reform
5. Reflection and planning of the next reform